

Classroom Management Methods

Classroom management is probably the most important skill for a teacher to master. Teachers who develop it early provide classrooms where students can learn. But some teachers never become good at it, and always seem to struggle with making sure that every student learns effectively.

There are different ways to manage your classroom. Some of them aren't very effective.

Teachers Who Give Up Control

As a teacher, you are responsible for your students' behaviour. It is your job to model good behaviour, and to expect it from your students.

Teachers who give up control don't care what their students do when they walk out of the classroom. They ignore behaviours that they don't want to deal with, especially in the hallways, and especially by other classes. They punish, rather than trying to deal with behaviour or effort problems.

Instead, you need to be a teacher who is responsible and accountable for her students' behaviour at all times during the school day. Tell your students what your expectations are, both inside and outside the classroom. Monitor their behaviour in the hallways. Deal with behaviour issues back in your own classroom with discussions and with discipline.

Expect the best from your students at all times, and let your disappointment show when you don't get it.

Teachers Who Reward Performance and Behaviour

This classroom management technique is sometimes known as 'bribery'. It involves paying your students continuously for good behaviour with trinkets, certificates, pizza parties, or food.

Teachers who practice bribery rationalize it by convincing themselves that they are helping students to change their behaviours. In fact, what they are really doing is hurting students ... preventing them from developing their

own sense of what is right and good, all for the sake of a functioning classroom.

While rewards can sometimes be a good thing, the systematic use of rewards for good behaviour will never create a community of learners that makes for an effective classroom.

If you want your students to put in more on-task behaviour, compliment their work. Compliment what you want more of. "*Jesse, what great work! I like the descriptive words you used!*" Put positive comments on the written work they've handed in.

If you want your students' behaviour to improve, compliment the behaviour you want to see more of. "*Thank you, Emily, for returning to your seat so quietly!*" Thank the class, or groups within the class, for exhibiting the behaviour you expect. "*Thank you for keeping your voices down while you were working.*"

The fact that you value good behaviour or good effort will help the students to see its intrinsic value. They will want to please you.

Teachers Who are Drill Sergeants

Teachers like this are disciplinarians. They take control of their classrooms from the first day, and no student ever dares to misbehave. Classrooms like this are usually very quiet. Work gets done. The students learn to follow the rules and be quiet.

The problem is that students' behaviour is controlled by an external source ... the teacher. They don't learn to control their own behaviour, and their behaviour deteriorates badly when the teacher is absent, or when they are not directly supervised.

More importantly, students are not learning together, and they don't learn to care about their own learning or the learning of others.

Teachers Who Create a Classroom Community

A classroom community could be defined as “an extended family of young people who learn to care about each other, learn to work together...and as a result, learn better than they otherwise could. Community [is] respect, responsibility and values, multiplying any application of classroom management resources exponentially”.
(Betsy Weigle)

As a teacher, you lead. You motivate students to exhibit proper behaviour, and you encourage them to help each other. You value discussion, and you reward students often with positive comments.

Good Elementary teachers use this. Little kids get it!

As someone who has spent a lot of my career teaching Jr High students, I have found that, quite often, students at this age do not have a lot of empathy when it comes to being aware of the learning needs of others. It is very difficult to teach empathy ... I think it's the hormones! Student behaviour often reflects this. While learning communities are certainly possible, it can require a lot of work by the teacher. Some students don't get it, and never see that their behaviour can sometimes affect others negatively.

In Sr High, particularly in academic subjects, things return to normal ... students can work together to learn new things, are willing to help others, and their behaviour is usually conducive to making a classroom a learning community.

Classrooms run this way can be noisy. A learning community within the classroom is an exciting thing to watch, as students discuss ideas with each other, help each other, ask questions, and get excited about learning.

As an Assistant Principal, I quickly learned that the noisy classrooms were often the ones where the most learning was happening!

*Some information for this article was obtained from the site
<http://www.classroom-teacher-resources.com/> by Betsy Weigle*